

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Spectrum Rules and Policies for the Operation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems; Petition of AIA for Rulemaking to Adopt Service Rules for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Command and Control in the 5030-5091 MHz Band*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WT Docket No. 22-323, RM-11798 (terminated)

I'm pleased to see us move toward unleashing more spectrum for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

As I've said before, this is an area where the United States can clearly lead with the right regulatory support. U.S. companies and research universities continue to incubate drone technologies at FAA-designated testing sites across the country—including in Nevada, where I previously visited a testbed to learn about the industry's vision and growing challenges. In 2021, we helped drive drone development through the establishment of FCC "Innovation Zones." We followed it up by refreshing the record on a path forward for drones in the 5030-5091 MHz band—which is the focus of our action today. As I said back then, "these systems cannot truly flourish without Commission action governing the operation of UAS in licensed spectrum," and getting there "will require careful work with our federal partners." Today, after close collaboration with NTIA and the FAA, we're proposing service and licensing rules to support robust, reliable, and safe UAS deployments in the 5 GHz band. That's real progress.

Of course, even as far as the Commission's role is concerned, securing a vibrant future for UAS isn't about just one frequency band. That's why I'm pleased to see us incorporate other critical issues related to drone operations into this notice of proposed rulemaking. Consistent with industry and academic interest and ongoing standards-setting efforts, we're exploring 5G as a UAS platform and the broader use of cellular bands for drone applications. We're also proposing a way to license drone communications with air traffic control.

UAS technologies pose plenty of potential, and their promise goes well beyond just package deliveries. They can aid disaster relief, protect critical infrastructure, enhance smart applications and precision agriculture, improve public safety, and even help us build more safely and efficiently. We're right to continue supporting their development, even as we also explore the unique policy challenges posed by their operation.

I am grateful to the Commission staff who developed this item. It has my full support.